

Message

From: Thompson, Steve [thompson.steve@epa.gov]
Sent: 5/5/2020 6:45:41 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]
CC: Stucky, Marie [Stucky.Marie@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Yes, I would keep it simple: the new continuous network is installed, we are going through the initial phase of setting VOC trigger levels and we expect to have data posted soon on EPA's website.

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 1:42 PM
To: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Cc: Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Steve,

I can definitely have the questions answered by tomorrow, so we are fine for Thursday. Do you agree, and would you like to respond for EN or should I? Thanks

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
1201 Elm St., Suite 500, ECCAT
Dallas, TX 75270
(214) 665-6569
leathers.james@epa.gov

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From: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2020 1:38 PM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Yes, from ARD.

Frances Verhalen, P.E., Chief
Air Monitoring & Grants Section
US Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Elm Street, Suite 500 (MC 6ARPM)
Dallas, TX 75270
214-665-2172
verhalen.frances@epa.gov

From: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2020 1:33 PM
To: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Can we have them by Thursday?

From: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2020 1:17 PM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Jennah, when do you need answers?

Frances Verhalen, P.E., Chief
Air Monitoring & Grants Section
US Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Elm Street, Suite 500 (MC 6ARPM)
Dallas, TX 75270
214-665-2172
verhalen.frances@epa.gov

From: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2020 12:17 PM
To: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Hi all—

Please see the below inquiry on Denka monitoring. What can we say about these questions?

Jennah

And I see the EPA data monitoring sheet hasn't been updated since the end of March. Is it just updated quarterly? Do the results between January and March show improvement compared to what the St. John folks are indicating in their comparison of 2018 and 2019 data?

And what is the status of the new continuous air monitoring program? In his Feb. 20 letter to DEQ Sec. Brown, regional administrator McQueen said it would be in place by the beginning of May.

From: Frances Madeson <francesmadeson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 9:19 AM
To: francesmadeson@gmail.com
Subject: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Concerned Citizens of St. John

CONTACT: Frances Madeson
412-616-0109



FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
May 5, 2020

**Comparison of 2018 and 2019 Chloroprene Emissions Levels from Denka Dupont
Elastomer Plant Shows Levels Remain Frighteningly Unsafe with No Significant
Improvement**

**St. John residents horrified that outsized rates of risk for cancer and chronic illnesses
continue unabated**

Dear Valued Member of the Press:

Please find attached a Press Release from Concerned Citizens of St. John with Slides of the Monitoring Data. I am happy to liaise for interviews or provide any other needed information.

Thank you for your continued attention to this urgent health crisis.

--

Frances Madeson
412-616-0109
<https://francesmadeson.com/>

Message

From: Robinson, Jeffrey [Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov]
Sent: 5/6/2020 2:27:07 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Thanks for responding to SPod question.

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2020 9:25 AM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Cc: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>; Lannen, Justin <Lannen.Justin@epa.gov>; Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>; Robinson, Jeffrey <Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Hi Jennah,

I have coordinated and ARD (air program), and they will take the lead on drafting a response to the first two questions.

Regarding the following questions, please see our response below (approved by Air Enforcement Management). Let me know if you have any questions or edits. Also, it's worth noting that Enforcement and ARD have a briefing scheduled with the RA/DRA on Thursday 3-3:30 to summarize SPod data and receive feedback on our Draft SPod results sheet that we would like added to EPA's LaPlace website.

"And what is the status of the new continuous air monitoring program? In his Feb. 20 letter to DEQ Sec. Brown, regional administrator McQueen said it would be in place by the beginning of May"

EPA's new SPod monitoring network is installed and operational. SPods consist of a stationary photoionization detector (PID), a meteorological station to record weather data, and one or more summa canisters for sampling. The PID measures for total volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the ambient air and, when VOC concentrations reach a certain threshold, a canister will collect a sample that will be measured for chloroprene in a laboratory. The SPods are going through an initial phase of setting the VOC thresholds that will trigger canister sample collection. EPA expects to have chloroprene data from the SPod network posted soon on EPA's LaPlace, Louisiana - Air Monitoring website.

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Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
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From: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2020 12:17 PM

To: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>

Subject: FW: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Hi all—

Please see the below inquiry on Denka monitoring. What can we say about these questions?

Jennah

And I see the EPA data monitoring sheet hasn't been updated since the end of March. Is it just updated quarterly? Do the results between January and March show improvement compared to what the St. John folks are indicating in their comparison of 2018 and 2019 data?

And what is the status of the new continuous air monitoring program? In his Feb. 20 letter to DEQ Sec. Brown, regional administrator McQueen said it would be in place by the beginning of May.

From: Frances Madeson <francesmadeson@gmail.com>

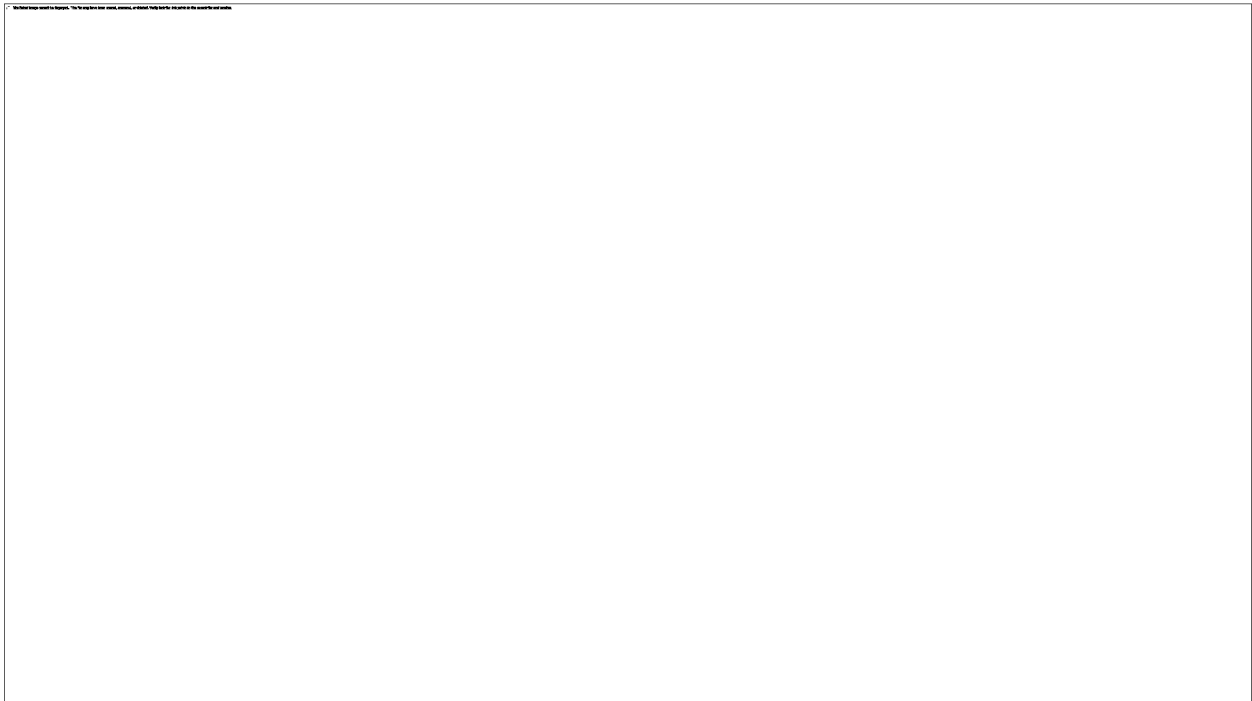
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 9:19 AM

To: francesmadeson@gmail.com

Subject: PRESS RELEASE from Concerned Citizens of St. John Regarding Denka Emissions Data Report

Concerned Citizens of St. John

CONTACT: Frances Madeson
412-616-0109



FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

May 5, 2020

Comparison of 2018 and 2019 Chloroprene Emissions Levels from Denka Dupont Elastomer Plant Shows Levels Remain Frighteningly Unsafe with No Significant Improvement

St. John residents horrified that outsized rates of risk for cancer and chronic illnesses continue unabated

Dear Valued Member of the Press:

Please find attached a Press Release from Concerned Citizens of St. John with Slides of the Monitoring Data. I am happy to liaise for interviews or provide any other needed information.

Thank you for your continued attention to this urgent health crisis.

--

Frances Madeson

412-616-0109

<https://francesmadeson.com/>

Message

From: Thompson, Steve [thompson.steve@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/21/2020 6:31:12 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Corry confirmed sending for awareness and not for comments/concurrence

From: Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2020 1:28 PM
To: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Schiermeyer, Corry" <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>
Date: September 21, 2020 at 1:08:20 PM CDT
To: "Seager, Cheryl" <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>, "Garcia, David" <Garcia.David@epa.gov>, "McAtee, Jeffrey" <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Hello Cheryl,

I think sending for review/awareness is appropriate while OAR reviews/approves.
I don't think you necessarily need to ask for approvals, but for awareness as you mention below.

Thank you!

From: Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2020 1:03 PM
To: Schiermeyer, Corry <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>; Garcia, David <Garcia.David@epa.gov>; McAtee, Jeffrey <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Hi Corry,

We have reviewed for ECAD and no additional comments. James Leathers has forwarded the final version to the HQ contacts for their awareness. We are providing for review, but we were not expecting comments or concurrence since it is an OAR report. If you want us to get concurrence, HQ may have additional comments – so let me know if you want us to put it through a concurrence process.

Thanks,
Cheryl

From: Schiermeyer, Corry <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2020 12:06 PM

To: Garcia, David <Garcia.David@epa.gov>; Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>; McAtee, Jeffrey <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>

Subject: FW: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Hello David and Cheryl,

Are you all routing this through HQ? Please let me know if you need me to do that.
Also...Jeff...was your team able to help David with the design?

Thank you!

From: Gray, David <gray.david@epa.gov>

Sent: Monday, September 21, 2020 11:42 AM

To: Garcia, David <Garcia.David@epa.gov>; Schiermeyer, Corry <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>; Air Monitoring <AirMonitoring@usepa.onmicrosoft.com>; Tanimura, Erin <Tanimura.Erin@epa.gov>; Blanco, Arturo <Blanco.Arturo@epa.gov>; McAtee, Jeffrey <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Taheri, Diane <Taheri.Diane@epa.gov>; Ngo, Kim <Ngo.Kim@epa.gov>; Robinson, Jeffrey <Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>; Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; McGuire, James <McGuire.James@epa.gov>; Welton, Patricia <Welton.Patricia@epa.gov>; Barnett, Cheryl <Barnett.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Lannen, Justin <Lannen.Justin@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Report is looking good to me. Can we make sure HQ program offices have reviewed it. I'd like to finalize and post it this Friday, September 25 if possible. Okay?

David

From: Garcia, David <Garcia.David@epa.gov>

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 11:11 AM

To: Schiermeyer, Corry <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>; Air Monitoring <AirMonitoring@usepa.onmicrosoft.com>; Tanimura, Erin <Tanimura.Erin@epa.gov>; Blanco, Arturo <Blanco.Arturo@epa.gov>; McAtee, Jeffrey <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Taheri, Diane <Taheri.Diane@epa.gov>; Ngo, Kim <Ngo.Kim@epa.gov>; Robinson, Jeffrey <Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>; Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; McGuire, James <McGuire.James@epa.gov>; Welton, Patricia <Welton.Patricia@epa.gov>; Barnett, Cheryl <Barnett.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Lannen, Justin <Lannen.Justin@epa.gov>; Gray, David <gray.david@epa.gov>

Subject: Air Monitoring DRAT Report: Community Monitoring

Dear Colleagues,

Please refer to the air monitoring SharePoint site and within the letters subdirectory for the draft Community Air Monitoring Report. Corry/Jeff can you pls assist with the design or information for the report cover page. If you have the opportunity please take some time reading the report as we welcome your input, insight, suggested changes, etc..... Have a good day.

David F. Garcia, P.E.

Director
Air and Radiation Division
Ph. 214 665 7593

U.S. EPA Region 6
1201 Elm Street
Dallas, Texas

From: Schiermeyer, Corry <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:02 AM

To: Air Monitoring <AirMonitoring@usepa.onmicrosoft.com>; Tanimura, Erin <Tanimura.Erin@epa.gov>; Blanco, Arturo <Blanco.Arturo@epa.gov>; McAtee, Jeffrey <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Taheri, Diane <Taheri.Diane@epa.gov>; Garcia, David <Garcia.David@epa.gov>; Ngo, Kim <Ngo.Kim@epa.gov>; Robinson, Jeffrey <Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>; Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>; Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>; Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>; McGuire, James <McGuire.James@epa.gov>; Welton, Patricia <Welton.Patricia@epa.gov>; Barnett, Cheryl <Barnett.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Lannen, Justin <Lannen.Justin@epa.gov>

Subject: Denka letter, response, website update and q/a

Hello Everyone...I hope all is well.

Following up on yesterday's call, in talking to David and Ken...David says to move forward with making final edits to the website language.

David mentioned that we expect the draft report to be uploaded today, thank you!

David/Diane...this should help with planning the rollout.

Also, for the letter (attached), both David and Ken would like us to expedite the response and not do the usual two weeks. Therefore we were hoping to have a final letter to send by Tuesday. Please work through the normal process, just on an expedited time frame. We should also draft the letter as if it will be released to others and publicly (I have no doubt it will get sent to the media).

I also think the letter response should help with q/a that I think we should have on hand.

I know we will want to answer at least the following...I know we have the answers...we just need them in one doc and cleared. OEA could have the pen for this one with input from the rest of the team on this email.

Why should we trust the continuing monitoring system?

Why are you stopping the Community monitoring system?

Why are you ending monitoring all together at the end of the year?

Some explanation of the difference in how the data is presented...it looks like the community monitoring system provided much more data than the continuous. How can you be confident in the continuous (SPOD) data, when you don't have as much to analyze? (something of that sort)

These are just a few questions...I know we have answers to them and we have explained them to some in the community, but they will continue to come up.

Jeff/Diane...your team may have some other questions you anticipate you may get from the media.

Arturo...please weigh in, as well, based on what we may get from the community.

Thank you...please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Corry Schiermeyer
Associate Deputy Regional Administrator
Region 6 (Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and 66 Tribal Nations)
Environmental Protection Agency
Schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov
202-641-3186

Message

From: Larson, Darrin [Larson.Darrin@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/30/2020 5:59:47 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]
Subject: Thanks - RE: Re: Draft WAR

Darrin Larson
Chief, Air Permitting Enforcement Section (ECDAP)
U.S. EPA Region 6
Office: 214-665-7115
Mobile: 972-467-5509

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 9:54 AM
To: Larson, Darrin <Larson.Darrin@epa.gov>
Cc: Lannen, Justin <Lannen.Justin@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Draft WAR

Hi Darrin,

Please see draft WAR below. It has been entered for management review. Justin drafted the portion in bold (just FYI)

EPA's Community Air Monitoring Program ends; Region 6 sends letters regarding air monitoring changes; and EPA continues SPod Monitoring around the Denka facility

On September 26, 2020, EPA discontinued its community air monitoring program in LaPlace, Louisiana. Since 2016, the program resulted in the collection of over 2,500 air samples and, since Denka implemented chloroprene emission control measures in March 2018, the samples indicate a significant reduction in the levels of chloroprene in the ambient air at all monitoring sites. On September 22, 2020, the Regional Administrator sent letters to LDEQ and St. John the Baptist Parish informing them of the change. EPA plans to continue its Continuous Air Monitoring Program, using SPods, until December 2020. The Continuous Air Monitoring Program is designed to help EPA understand the magnitude and frequency of occasional, but recurring, elevated chloroprene measurements or "spikes" that contribute to the long-term chloroprene averages. Another objective of the Continuous Air Monitoring Program is to help identify unknown or under-characterized emissions sources or activities at the facility. This continuous monitoring approach may help EPA identify possible actions that Denka could take to further reduce chloroprene in the community. On September 4, 2020, the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic sent a letter to EPA critical of EPA's air monitoring changes. On September 17, 2020, the Regional Administrator responded via letter to TELC, describing the objectives and potential benefits of the continuous monitoring system. EPA continues to monitor the ambient air using a network of SPod air monitors around the Denka facility in LaPlace, LA. The SPods, located at the Fifth Ward Elementary School, East St John High School, Chad Baker Street, Ochsner Hospital, Acorn/Hwy 44, and the Levee, continuously measure ambient VOC concentrations. Any exceedance of certain VOC levels triggers the collection of a 24-hour air sample via summa canister and a subsequent lab analysis of that sample. On July 23, a firmware update that allows the SPods to set a dynamic threshold trigger was installed at all SPod locations. The new dynamic trigger levels have been set for all SPods. The trigger is set at some level above the raw PID data after a baseline removal algorithm has been applied. The trigger levels are currently set at 148 ppb at Fifth Ward Elementary School, 218 ppb at East St John High School, 149 ppb Chad Baker Street, 122 ppb at Ochsner Hospital, 187 ppb at Acorn/Hwy 44, and 120 ppb at the Levee. Using the dynamic trigger, 21 canisters have been triggered and analyzed. Using the dynamic trigger, the highest chloroprene result thus far is 1.958 µg/m³ at the Acorn/Hwy 44 location. Chloroprene results from the Continuous Air Monitoring Program were added to EPA's public website, on September 11, 2020.

James Leathers
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Message

From: Frey, Sarah [frey.sarah@epa.gov]
Sent: 11/24/2020 3:21:14 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: Re: Draft WAR

Thanks!

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 9:21 AM
To: Frey, Sarah <frey.sarah@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Re: Draft WAR

Just an FYI that my WAR was received by Steve T. I think he will approve so it should be good to go. Thanks

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
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From: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 9:00 AM
To: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Re: Draft WAR

Thanks James!

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 8:57 AM
To: Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>
Cc: Lannen, Justin <Lannen.Justin@epa.gov>; Frey, Sarah <frey.sarah@epa.gov>; Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Draft WAR

Hi Marie,
Please see draft WAR below. It has been entered for management review.

EPA continues SPod Monitoring around the Denka facility

EPA continues to monitor the ambient air using a network of SPod air monitors around the Denka facility in LaPlace, LA. The SPods, located at the Fifth Ward Elementary School, East St John High School, Chad Baker Street, Ochsner Hospital, Acorn/Hwy 44, and the Levee, continuously measure ambient VOC concentrations. Any exceedance of certain VOC levels triggers the collection of a 24-hour air sample via summa canister and a subsequent lab analysis of that sample. On July 23, a firmware update that allows the SPods to set a dynamic threshold trigger was installed at all SPod locations. The new dynamic trigger levels have been set for all SPods. The trigger is set at some level above the raw PID data after a baseline removal algorithm has been applied. The trigger levels are currently set at 94 ppb at Fifth Ward Elementary School, 100 ppb at East St John High School, 69 ppb Chad Baker Street, 77 ppb at Ochsner Hospital, 116 ppb at Acorn/Hwy 44, and 53 ppb at the Levee. Using the dynamic trigger, 33 canisters have been triggered and analyzed. Using the dynamic trigger, the highest chloroprene result thus far is 15.182 µg/m³ at the Fifth Ward Elementary School location. Chloroprene results from the Continuous Air Monitoring Program were added to EPA's public website, on September 11, 2020. On September 26, 2020, EPA discontinued its community air monitoring program in LaPlace, Louisiana. Starting on October 1, 2020, any continuous air monitor that has not sampled within seven days will be manually triggered as an instrumentation quality check. 15 canisters have been manually triggered and analyzed since October 1, 2020 with the highest manually triggered result being 10.700 µg/m³ at the Levee location.

James Leathers
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Message

From: Thompson, Steve [thompson.steve@epa.gov]
Sent: 12/17/2020 3:04:08 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]; Stucky, Marie [Stucky.Marie@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: URGENT: DENKA WAR

FYI...since this change was outside of the system

From: Taheri, Diane <Taheri.Diane@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:43 AM
To: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Cc: Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Gilrein, Stephen <gilrein.stephen@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: URGENT: DENKA WAR

Thank you!

Diane

From: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:22 AM
To: Taheri, Diane <Taheri.Diane@epa.gov>
Cc: Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>; Gilrein, Stephen <gilrein.stephen@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: URGENT: DENKA WAR

I changed the title and added a couple of sentences to address the letters. Let me know if you need more.

EPA announces extension of SPod Monitoring around the Denka facility: EPA plans to extend the SPod Monitoring until February 2021 in order to collect monitoring data during the upcoming facility turnaround. EPA notified LDEQ and Parish Officials of this decision by letter on 12/16/20. EPA continues to monitor the ambient air using a network of SPod air monitors around the Denka facility in LaPlace, LA. The SPods, located at the Fifth Ward Elementary School, East St John High School, Chad Baker Street, Ochsner Hospital, Acorn/Hwy 44, and the Levee, continuously measure ambient VOC concentrations. Any exceedance of certain VOC levels triggers the collection of a 24-hour air sample via summa canister and a subsequent lab analysis of that sample. On July 23, a firmware update that allows the SPods to set a dynamic threshold trigger was installed at all SPod locations. The new dynamic trigger levels have been set for all SPods. The trigger is set at some level above the raw PID data after a baseline removal algorithm has been applied. The trigger levels are currently set at 94 ppb at Fifth Ward Elementary School, 100 ppb at East St John High School, 61 ppb Chad Baker Street, 100 ppb at Ochsner Hospital, 116 ppb at Acorn/Hwy 44, and 69 ppb at the Levee. Using the dynamic trigger, 37 canisters have been triggered and analyzed. Using the dynamic trigger, the highest chloroprene result thus far is 15.182 µg/m³ at the Fifth Ward Elementary School location. Chloroprene results from the Continuous Air Monitoring Program were added to EPA's public website, on September 11, 2020. On September 26, 2020, EPA discontinued its community air monitoring program in LaPlace, Louisiana. Starting on October 1, 2020, any continuous air monitor that has not sampled within seven days will be manually triggered as an instrumentation quality check. 22 canisters have been manually triggered and analyzed since October 1, 2020 with the highest manually triggered result being 13.938 µg/m³ at the Levee location.

From: Seager, Cheryl <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:14 AM
To: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: URGENT: DENKA WAR

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Taheri, Diane" <Taheri.Diane@epa.gov>
Date: December 17, 2020 at 8:12:51 AM CST
To: "Seager, Cheryl" <Seager.Cheryl@epa.gov>, "Gilrein, Stephen" <gilrein.stephen@epa.gov>
Cc: "Fanning, Cynthia" <fanning.cynthia@epa.gov>, "McAtee, Jeffrey" <McAtee.Jeffrey@epa.gov>
Subject: **URGENT: DENKA WAR**

Hey guys, we the front office is asking for a Denka Write up that addresses the letters that went out yesterday. I thought we wouldn't include that since it already happened. Here's what's in the system, but could we tweak it to include the letters that went out? I'm not sure what the main purpose of those letters were. The front office wants this right away. Most of the info in this writeup states things that happened previously.

EPA continues SPod Monitoring around the Denka facility: EPA continues to monitor the ambient air using a network of SPod air monitors around the Denka facility in LaPlace, LA. The SPods, located at the Fifth Ward Elementary School, East St John High School, Chad Baker Street, Ochsner Hospital, Acorn/Hwy 44, and the Levee, continuously measure ambient VOC concentrations. Any exceedance of certain VOC levels triggers the collection of a 24-hour air sample via summa canister and a subsequent lab analysis of that sample. On July 23, a firmware update that allows the SPods to set a dynamic threshold trigger was installed at all SPod locations. The new dynamic trigger levels have been set for all SPods. The trigger is set at some level above the raw PID data after a baseline removal algorithm has been applied. The trigger levels are currently set at 94 ppb at Fifth Ward Elementary School, 100 ppb at East St John High School, 61 ppb Chad Baker Street, 100 ppb at Ochsner Hospital, 116 ppb at Acorn/Hwy 44, and 69 ppb at the Levee. Using the dynamic trigger, 37 canisters have been triggered and analyzed. Using the dynamic trigger, the highest chloroprene result thus far is 15.182 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at the Fifth Ward Elementary School location. Chloroprene results from the Continuous Air Monitoring Program were added to EPA's public website, on September 11, 2020. On September 26, 2020, EPA discontinued its community air monitoring program in LaPlace, Louisiana. Starting on October 1, 2020, any continuous air monitor that has not sampled within seven days will be manually triggered as an instrumentation quality check. 22 canisters have been manually triggered and analyzed since October 1, 2020 with the highest manually

triggered result being 13.938 µg/m3 at the Levee location. EPA plans to continue SPod Monitoring until February 2021, barring unforeseen circumstances.

Diane Taheri

Staff Director

Office of External Affairs

EPA Region 6

Direct: (214) 665-7460

Mobile: (214) 864-7241



Message

From: Chuong, Bao [Chuong.Bao@epa.gov]
Sent: 3/23/2021 3:04:40 PM
To: Leathers, James [Leathers.James@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: OIG follow-up on Denka

Thanks, James for the prompt response!

Bao

Bao Chuong
EPA-OIG
75 Hawthorne St.
MC: IGA-1
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 947-4533

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 4:34 AM
To: Chuong, Bao <Chuong.Bao@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: OIG follow-up on Denka

Hello Bao,

I understand that EPA's community air monitoring at the six sites near Denka (i.e., the every 6 days monitoring/sampling) ended on September 26, 2020. Yes, that is correct

I also understand that EPA started a "continuous" air monitoring program in March 2020 to better understand spikes in ambient chloroprene concentrations. Yes, that is correct

Is this "continuous" air monitoring program still going on indefinitely? Or has this "continuous" air monitoring program ended? If it has ended, when was the last day of the continuous air monitoring? The continuous air monitoring program is still ongoing and is funded through the end of April 2021. There is no Agency commitment or decision to extend beyond April 2021 that I am aware of.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or if I can help with anything additional.

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
1201 Elm St., Suite 500, ECCAT
Dallas, TX 75270
(214) 665-6569
leathers.james@epa.gov

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From: Chuong, Bao <Chuong.Bao@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 6:30 PM
To: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Subject: OIG follow-up on Denka
Importance: High

Hi James,

I understand that EPA's community air monitoring at the six sites near Denka (i.e., the every 6 days monitoring/sampling) ended on September 26, 2020. I also understand that EPA started a "continuous" air monitoring program in March 2020 to better understand spikes in ambient chloroprene concentrations. Is this "continuous" air monitoring program still going on indefinitely? Or has this "continuous" air monitoring program ended? If it has ended, when was the last day of the continuous air monitoring?

Thanks,
Bao

Bao Chuong
EPA-OIG
75 Hawthorne St.
MC: IGA-1
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 947-4533

Message

From: Leathers, James [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=C618FFCE94D406F9CB82B430B073FE1-LEATHERS, JAMES]
Sent: 10/28/2019 6:17:35 PM
To: Verhalen, Frances [verhalen.frances@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: Re: Community monitoring Communications

Thanks Fran!!

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
1201 Elm St., Suite 500, ECDAT
Dallas, TX 75202
(214) 665-6569
leathers.james@epa.gov

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From: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2019 1:14 PM
To: Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>; Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Re: Community monitoring Communications

James, as Ruben said, David Gray used this material in a public meeting in February 2019 in the LaPlace community. I remember there were some general LA air topics phone calls in late Spring/early Summer with Wilma Subra and Mary Lee Orr where we went over the information – pretty generic but these points.

Fran

Frances Verhalen, P.E., Chief
Air Monitoring & Grants Section
US Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Elm Street, Suite 500 (MC 6ARPM)
Dallas, TX 75270
214-665-2172
verhalen.frances@epa.gov

From: Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2019 1:07 PM
To: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Cc: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Re: Community monitoring Communications

James - We drafted this info for David Gray to use at a public meeting before the monitoring frequency change. See bullets in the attachment.

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2019 12:52 PM
To: Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>
Cc: Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Community monitoring Communications

Hi Fran,

I think you are aware that EPA is planning to conduct SPod monitoring around the start of the new year, at the Denka community monitoring locations. As we transition from the current monitoring scheme to the SPod monitoring system (assuming no significant change from OAR has been made), OECA is working on some communication materials that will help the community understand the transition. OECA is asking if we have anything written, that helps explain why we reduced our sampling frequency from every 3rd to every 6th day. If we have written materials, was the message communicated to the community during a meeting? If no written materials exists, do we know if an explanation was provided to the community during a meeting (if this is the case, hopefully we have a summary of what was shared so we avoid any inconsistencies in the OECA Draft materials).

Any help of info is greatly appreciated. Thanks

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
1201 Elm St., Suite 500, ECDAT
Dallas, TX 75202
(214) 665-6569
leathers.james@epa.gov

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270

Office of the Regional Administrator

December 19, 2019

St. John the Baptist Parish President
Natalie H. Robottom
1811 W. Airline Highway
LaPlace, LA 70068

Dear Parish President Robottom,

Last February, I visited with community members in LaPlace to talk about EPA's air monitoring program around the Denka facility and our plans to continue the program to December 2019. I write to update you on our plans to change the air monitoring program in 2020.

Since May 2016, EPA has collected, at regular intervals, 24-hour air canister samples at six monitoring locations near the Denka facility. After data validation, EPA posts monitoring data to our public website. Denka has also conducted its own air monitoring at six monitoring locations and continues this monitoring beyond the six months required by the Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) on January 6, 2017. Denka submitted a report to LDEQ on July 1, 2019, stating that Denka had met or exceeded all of the AOC's specifications for the installation and operation of the emission reduction projects associated with the AOC, and that Denka believes it has achieved an emissions reduction of 86%. Both EPA's and Denka's data has shown overall lower chloroprene concentrations in the ambient air near the monitors since Denka installed the regenerative thermal oxidizer in late 2017 and it became fully operational in March 2018. But we also continue to see spikes in chloroprene concentrations at different times.

In the coming year, we intend to implement a new air monitoring program to better understand the frequency and magnitude of chloroprene spikes. We believe that this air monitoring effort may help us identify actions that Denka may be able to take to reduce the occurrence of spikes and thereby further reduce ambient concentrations of chloroprene in the community. For the new program, our existing air monitoring stations will be replaced with new monitors, referred to as SPods, which will be placed at each of EPA's six existing community monitoring sites. Each SPod will contain a meteorological station to continuously measure wind speeds and directions and a photoionization detector (PID) to continuously measure total volatile organic compound (VOC) concentrations in the air. The SPods will include a sampling system that is automatically triggered to collect a 24-hour canister sample whenever the PID registers a spike in VOC. The sample will be sent to the laboratory for chloroprene analysis.

EPA will continue to post chloroprene data on our website, but the data from the new monitoring program will be different from the data posted for the past few years. To date, the EPA data has represented air samples collected at regular three or six-day intervals. Under the new program, the frequency of the sampling will depend on the occurrence of VOC spikes at the SPod

monitors and the sampling will only occur when there is a likely spike in chloroprene. Data from the new monitoring program should show the highest concentrations of chloroprene in the community and less likely to show low or undetectable levels of chloroprene.

EPA will continue to operate the existing air monitoring program until the new program is fully operational. We expect SPods to be operational by April 2020 and the program is expected to operate for about 6 months. We will keep you updated on our schedule. We also understand that Denka will continue its own monitoring program. Under this program, whenever a spike has been detected, Denka has been doing a "root cause assessment" to determine the cause of such events to help them further reduce chloroprene emissions at its facility.

I appreciate your continued support in our efforts to reduce chloroprene emissions in the community. EPA remains committed to this effort. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



David Gray
Deputy Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Brown, LDEQ



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270

Office of the Regional Administrator

January 23, 2020

St. John the Baptist Parish President
Jaclyn Hotard
1811 W. Airline Highway
LaPlace, LA 70068

Dear Parish President Hotard,

On December 19, 2019, I sent then-Parish President Robottom a letter to update her and the community of our plans to change EPA's air monitoring program in 2020. In that letter, we announced a new, continuous air monitoring program that will use a network of six SPods – devices comprised of a stationary photoionization detector (PID), a meteorological station to record weather data, and one or more summa canisters for sampling. The PID will automatically trigger the collection of a 24-hour canister sample whenever the PID registers a spike in volatile organic compounds (VOC). The sample will then be analyzed for the presence of chloroprene. We have a few additional updates that we would like to share with you in this letter, particularly regarding how we intend to collect the 24-hour canister samples, as well as timing of program deployment.

Upon initial deployment of the SPods, EPA will establish a sampling "trigger level" of VOC, above which EPA will take a canister sample. EPA intends to set a low initial trigger level based on the community monitoring data, which may result in samples being collected even when chloroprene concentrations may not be detected or are not elevated. EPA will gradually adjust the trigger level to avoid sampling when chloroprene concentrations are not detectable. By starting low and gradually raising the trigger level, EPA can be confident that it is not setting the trigger at a level that would overlook a sample during a spike occurrence. In addition, EPA may periodically collect non-automatically triggered 24-hour air canister samples to continue to characterize routine chloroprene levels and to evaluate whether the trigger level may be set too high.

EPA will continue to operate both the existing air monitoring program and the new program until the new program is fully operational. We expect SPods to be fully operational by April 2020 and the program is expected to operate for about six months. We are planning the initial SPod deployment for the week of February 16, 2020. We expect to continue to operate our existing air monitoring program until April 2020 and will keep you updated.

EPA is also working with Dr. Chuck Carr Brown of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to schedule a briefing for your office and to schedule a community meeting to discuss the details of this new program.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Gray', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Gray
Deputy Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, LDEQ

Message

From: Thompson, Steve [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DEB5F1524AE94DC69ED0F4B2D6CA446A-THOMPSON, STEVE]
Sent: 9/30/2020 4:57:23 PM
To: gilrein.stephen@epa.gov
Subject: WAR

EPA's Community Air Monitoring Program ends; Region 6 sends letters regarding air monitoring changes; and EPA continues SPod Monitoring around the Denka facility

On September 26, 2020, EPA discontinued its community air monitoring program in LaPlace, Louisiana. Since 2016, the program resulted in the collection of over 2,500 air samples and, since Denka implemented chloroprene emission control measures in March 2018, the samples indicate a significant reduction in the levels of chloroprene in the ambient air at all monitoring sites. On September 22, 2020, the Regional Administrator sent letters to LDEQ and St. John the Baptist Parish informing them of the change. EPA plans to continue its Continuous Air Monitoring Program, using SPods, until December 2020. The Continuous Air Monitoring Program is designed to help EPA understand the magnitude and frequency of occasional, but recurring, elevated chloroprene measurements or "spikes" that contribute to the long-term chloroprene averages. Another objective of the Continuous Air Monitoring Program is to help identify unknown or under-characterized emissions sources or activities at the facility. This continuous monitoring approach may help EPA identify possible actions that Denka could take to further reduce chloroprene in the community. On September 4, 2020, the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic sent a letter to EPA critical of EPA's air monitoring changes. On September 17, 2020, the Regional Administrator responded via letter to TELC, describing the objectives and potential benefits of the continuous monitoring system. EPA continues to monitor the ambient air using a network of SPod air monitors around the Denka facility in LaPlace, LA. The SPods, located at the Fifth Ward Elementary School, East St John High School, Chad Baker Street, Ochsner Hospital, Acorn/Hwy 44, and the Levee, continuously measure ambient VOC concentrations. Any exceedance of certain VOC levels triggers the collection of a 24-hour air sample via summa canister and a subsequent lab analysis of that sample. On July 23, a firmware update that allows the SPods to set a dynamic threshold trigger was installed at all SPod locations. The new dynamic trigger levels have been set for all SPods. The trigger is set at some level above the raw PID data after a baseline removal algorithm has been applied. The trigger levels are currently set at 148 ppb at Fifth Ward Elementary School, 218 ppb at East St John High School, 149 ppb Chad Baker Street, 122 ppb at Ochsner Hospital, 187 ppb at Acorn/Hwy 44, and 120 ppb at the Levee. Using the dynamic trigger, 21 canisters have been triggered and analyzed. Using the dynamic trigger, the highest chloroprene result thus far is 1.958 µg/m³ at the Acorn/Hwy 44 location. Chloroprene results from the Continuous Air Monitoring Program were added to EPA's public website, on September 11, 2020.

Message

From: Thompson, Steve [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DEB5F1524AE94DC69ED0F4B2D6CA446A-THOMPSON, STEVE]
Sent: 3/24/2021 3:52:01 PM
To: Kudla, Courtney [kudla.courtney@epa.gov]
CC: gilrein.stephen@epa.gov
Subject: FW: OIG follow-up on Denka

Spoke to soon!

Steve Thompson
Chief
Air Enforcement Branch
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
EPA Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Dallas, Texas 75270
214-665-2769

From: Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 10:44 AM
To: Thompson, Steve <thompson.steve@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: OIG follow-up on Denka

FYI

Sincerely,
Marie Stucky
Chief, Air Toxics Enforcement Section
EPA Region 6

From: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 6:35 AM
To: Stucky, Marie <Stucky.Marie@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: OIG follow-up on Denka

FYI, question from OIG that I responded to.

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
1201 Elm St., Suite 500, ECDAT
Dallas, TX 75270
(214) 665-6569
leathers.james@epa.gov

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From: Leathers, James
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 6:34 AM
To: Chuong, Bao <Chuong.Bao@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: OIG follow-up on Denka

Hello Bao,

I understand that EPA's community air monitoring at the six sites near Denka (i.e., the every 6 days monitoring/sampling) ended on September 26, 2020. Yes, that is correct

I also understand that EPA started a "continuous" air monitoring program in March 2020 to better understand spikes in ambient chloroprene concentrations. Yes, that is correct

Is this "continuous" air monitoring program still going on indefinitely? Or has this "continuous" air monitoring program ended? If it has ended, when was the last day of the continuous air monitoring? The continuous air monitoring program is still ongoing and is funded through the end of April 2021. There is no Agency commitment or decision to extend beyond April 2021 that I am aware of.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or if I can help with anything additional.

James Leathers
Environmental Engineer
EPA Region 6
Air Toxics Enforcement
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
1201 Elm St., Suite 500, ECDAT
Dallas, TX 75270
(214) 665-6569
leathers.james@epa.gov

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From: Chuong, Bao <Chuong.Bao@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 6:30 PM
To: Leathers, James <Leathers.James@epa.gov>
Subject: OIG follow-up on Denka
Importance: High

Hi James,

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monitoring program still going on indefinitely? Or has this “continuous” air monitoring program ended? If it has ended, when was the last day of the continuous air monitoring?

Thanks,
Bao

Bao Chuong
EPA-OIG
75 Hawthorne St.
MC: IGA-1
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 947-4533